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Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 70/201, provides an update on the implementation of processes derived from Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In that context, it addresses: the outcome of the meeting of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council from 11 to 20 July 2016, with the theme "Ensuring that no one is left behind"; the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism; the strengthening of the science-policy interface and the Global Sustainable Development Report; the regional dimension of sustainable development; and sustainable consumption and production. Additionally, in accordance with resolution 70/201, the report addresses the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development by the entities of the United Nations system and the their efforts to ensure that no country is left behind in the implementation of the resolution.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/201.

2. On 25 September 2015, the General Assembly adopted the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".[1]

3. As recognized in resolution 70/201, the 2030 Agenda builds upon elements of "The future we want", the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,[2] and provides, in conjunction with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,[3] the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway,[4] the Istanbul Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020[5] and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024,[6] among other related frameworks and agreements, a comprehensive and extensive implementation framework for the aspirations contained in that document. It represents a landmark in the mainstreaming, into the global development agenda, of the legacy of Agenda 21, the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The concepts and thematic areas covered in these instruments are directly or indirectly encompassed in the 2030 Agenda.

4. In the 2030 Agenda, and directly emanating from the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as part of its determinations on the theme of the "institutional framework for sustainable development", the high-level political forum on sustainable development was mandated, under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, with "the central role in overseeing follow-up and review at the global level".

5. Accordingly, the present report presents an update on: the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council from 11 to 20 July 2016, the first since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda; the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism; the strengthening of the science-policy interface and the Global Sustainable Development Report; and the regional dimension of sustainable development. The report also refers to sustainable consumption and production and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production.

6. Additionally, in accordance with resolution 70/201, the report refers to the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development by the entities of the United Nations system and the efforts of the entire system to ensure that no country is left behind in the implementation of the resolution.

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[1] Resolution 70/1.
[2] Resolution 66/288, annex.
[3] Resolution 69/313, annex.
[4] Resolution 69/15, annex.
[5] A/CONF.219/7, chap. I and II.
[6] Resolution 69/137.

7. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide, in consultation with Member States and other relevant stakeholders, an updated report on the progress of the activities related to the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, relevant activities within the United Nations system and the long-term institutional administrative and financial arrangements and accountability arrangements to Member States and other stakeholders of the Sustainable Energy for All initiative for submission to the Assembly at its seventy-first session. That report is forthcoming.

8. This report should be read in conjunction with other reports on sustainable development submitted to the General Assembly.

II. Follow-up and review

A. Meeting of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council

9. The high-level political forum on sustainable development held its first meeting since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda from 11 to 20 July 2016 under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The meeting included a three-day ministerial segment.

10. In preparation for the meeting, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums were invited to share relevant input and their deliberations with regard to addressing the Sustainable Development Goals and targets from the perspective of "Ensuring that no one is left behind". Forty-seven submissions were received from the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council, other intergovernmental bodies and multi-stakeholder platforms. A synthesis of these voluntary submissions has been prepared.[7] Fourteen submissions were received from major groups and other stakeholders on their contribution to implementation,[8] and an additional 100 were submitted, reporting on multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments.

11. Twenty-two[9] countries volunteered to present voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 67/290 and 70/1. Executive summaries of these reviews are contained in a note by the Secretariat.[10] The Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs provided support for the preparation of these reviews, under the leadership and guidance of the President of the Economic and Social Council, with generous funding by the Governments of Germany and United Arab Emirates for workshops that allowed for the exchange of ideas, practices and information and enabled a collective reflection on the voluntary national reviews, their format and role in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

[7] E/HLPF/2016/5.
[8] E/HLPF/2016/2.
[9] China, Colombia, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Madagascar, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Togo, Turkey, Uganda and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).
[10] E/HLPF/206/7.

12. In addition to the submissions of Governments presenting voluntary national reviews, two additional submissions were voluntarily made by Governments.[11]

13. The theme of the high-level political forum, "Ensuring that no one is left behind", refers to the pledge made in paragraph 4 of the 2030 Agenda. Interactive sessions were held addressing different aspects of this theme: "envisioning an inclusive world in 2030", "lifting people out of poverty and addressing basic needs", "fostering economic growth, prosperity and sustainability", "food security and sustainable agriculture, climate action, sustainable oceans and terrestrial ecosystems — adopting a nexus approach", and "creating peaceful and more inclusive societies and empowering women and girls". During the ministerial segment, the theme of the forum was addressed, with a focus on "reaching the most vulnerable", "challenges of countries in special situations" and "unlocking means of implementation for the Sustainable Development Goals and creating an enabling environment".

14. During the session dedicated to assessing "where we stand at year one", the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs presented the report of the Secretary-General on "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals".[12] The report presented the first overview of where the world stands at the outset of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, based on the set of global indicators developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and agreed upon, as a practical starting point, by the Statistical Commission in March 2016. The report summarized the regional and global status and trends for each Goal, using selected indicators for which data were available, and highlighted some specific population groups that are lagging behind as an input to the discussion on the theme of "Ensuring that no one is left behind".

15. Other discussions were held on issues relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including: new ideas, insights and solutions on the science-policy interface; creating ownership in regard to the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level; mainstreaming the Goals into national policies, plans and strategies and integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental; vertical cooperation between local authorities and Governments for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; challenges in mobilizing means of implementation at the national level; national mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on implementation for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; making the 2030 Agenda deliver for small island developing States, building on the SAMOA Pathway; countries in special situations; and multi-stakeholder engagement for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An interactive dialogue on regional experiences was held with chairs of regional forums on sustainable development, the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions and representatives of other regional organizations.

16. During the ministerial segment, the 22 voluntary national reviews were presented; a session was held on prospects for the future (projections, scenarios and new and emerging issues); and daily sessions of the general debate were held on the theme of the high-level political forum.

[11] Plurinational State of Bolivia and Qatar.
[12] E/2016/75.

17. The high-level political forum also included 109 side-events, a partnership exchange event for multi-stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge and expertise to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, a business forum on the Goals and a learning and practice programme related to the Goals.

18. The forum closed with the adoption of a ministerial declaration.[13]

19. The main messages of the forum are contained in the President's summary.

20. The following messages derived from the discussions on the theme of the conference, "Ensuring that no one is left behind", are of particular relevance to the role of the United Nations system in follow-up and review and in supporting countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

(a) Implementing the 2030 Agenda and ensuring that no one is left behind requires an urgent strategic shift whereby the instruments, policies and attitudes that create conditions of inequality and vulnerability must be changed, and obstacles faced by the poorest and most vulnerable countries and people must be identified and addressed;

(b) Inclusive, participatory and multi-stakeholder decision-making processes at all levels are key to safeguarding commitments and ensuring that no one is left behind. Vulnerable and underrepresented groups must be actively involved in decision-making as partners and rights-holders and as a source of knowledge. Education is a key factor in the ability to participate effectively and take ownership of development processes. All stakeholders, including Governments at all levels, the private sector, civil society, indigenous peoples and the scientific community, which have a role to play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, should participate and contribute. To that end, sustained political leadership by Heads of State and Government is necessary;

(c) Challenges to lifting people out of poverty and ensuring that no one is left behind are interconnected and must be addressed as such under a human-rights based approach, including a gender perspective. Silo approaches will not work. Instead, implementation efforts will require integration across disciplines, ministries, the public and private sectors and local, national, regional and international levels, with the active involvement of scientists and experts, civil society and private citizens. Such efforts will require a focus on the interconnections between different issue areas and Goals. For example, a nexus approach to food security, sustainable agriculture, climate action, sustainable oceans and terrestrial ecosystems is critical as all of these issues are highly interdependent. Institutions will need to respond to the need for integration, coordination and coherence, the need to address interlinkages and to involve multiple stakeholders and the imperative of leaving no one behind. Some countries are already implementing institutional reforms or solutions in this direction;

(d) Decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation, ensuring sustainable consumption and production and respecting planetary boundaries are fundamental in order to ensure that no one is left behind;

(e) There is an urgent need for investment for the generation of disaggregated data to ensure the visibility of different groups in national statistics,

[13] E/2016/L.24-E/HLPF/2016/L.2.

thereby providing inputs for policy formulation and follow-up. There is a need for enhanced support for capacity-building in statistics at all levels by the United Nations system, including through the strengthening of national statistical institutes and offices. The active engagement of different groups, including indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, is instrumental for the identification of indicators and data sources adapted to their specific challenges and realities;

(f) The Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved if significant progress is not made in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. Middle-income countries also face specific challenges, including widespread domestic disparities that are not reflected in the per capita income criteria;

(g) New and pressing challenges, some of which may be unforeseen, will present significant challenges to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to leaving no one behind. One example is the current refugee and migrant crisis. Swift international action is necessary to ensure effective response to these challenges in an integrated manner.

21. The first round of presentations of voluntary national reviews revealed that volunteering countries are deeply engaged in mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets in their national strategies, plans and policies, including by: nationalizing and localizing the Goals and targets, putting in place consultation and coordination processes for the Goals and targets and setting up monitoring and evaluation systems at the national level, including revising or creating sets of indicators. While the reviews presented showed many similarities in terms of vision, goals and priorities, they also reflected differences in priority areas stemming from varying national contexts. All reviews mentioned means of implementation in general, and Goal 17 as a critical aspect of the implementation of the Agenda. Many reviews discussed the role of the private sector and of partnerships in the implementation process. At the global level, it will be important to reflect on what has been achieved through these reviews, where gaps remain, how this instrument can be of even greater benefit to the international community in the coming years and how the lessons learned through each country's own review and those of other countries may be applied at the national and subnational levels. Several volunteering countries acknowledged the support provided to them by the United Nations system for the preparation of their reviews, and the need for further support from the system to enhance data collection capacity was mentioned in many reviews.

22. With regard to the means of implementation, the debates stressed that:

(a) Achieving the 2030 Agenda requires a revitalized and enhanced global partnership: follow-up and review of commitments in terms of means of implementation must be an integral part of overall follow-up and review;

(b) An international economic environment that sustainably harnesses international private business and finance, development cooperation and trade, with special attention to the needs of those left furthest behind, will help overcome some of the challenges in mobilizing means of implementation;

(c) There is concern that certain existing agreements may hinder the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, reducing policy space. Limited capacity for

domestic resource mobilization in developing countries constrains the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) International development cooperation has to respond to the transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda. Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments must be met. ODA could become a better catalyst for partnerships between civil society and the public and private sectors;

(e) International cooperation should help address issues such as tax evasion, control and repatriation of illicit capital flows and tax base erosion, which deprive developing countries of much needed financial resources;

(f) The United Nations should continue to be a crucial platform for advocacy and operational capacities to mobilize partnerships;

(g) Science, technology and innovation have to be mobilized in support of the 2030 Agenda. It is important to reorient scientific and technological research towards inclusiveness and sustainable natural resource management. Science, technology and innovation can both enable and divide, and the development of national road maps in this area, as components of national sustainable development strategies, need to address this reality. Policies on science, technology and innovation need to be assessed based on economic, social and environmental impacts and outcomes;

(h) Government support for basic research will be critical in advancing science, technology and innovation, and support for the creation of markets will help ensure that innovative products and processes become commercially viable. ODA is important in order to catalyse Government support for science, technology and innovation. As a complement to North-South cooperation, South-South cooperation can also contribute by enabling the sharing of technology that is readily applicable in different developing country contexts;

(i) The newly established Technology Facilitation Mechanism, its annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and its online platform have great potential to support national and local implementation of the Goals. Issues to be addressed in this context include the development of national policy road maps, methods of technology evaluation, the sharing and transfer of knowledge and multilateral resource mobilization for long-term investment in technology. A focus on capacity-building and the building of literacy in the field of science, technology and innovation is required for the creation of innovative knowledge societies.

23. During the ministerial segment, there was an oral report on the inaugural session of the annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up established by the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.[14] The session, held from 18 to 20 April 2016, resulted in intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.[15] The summary issued by the President of the Council provided a concise overview of the substantive discussions and highlighted the salient features of the forum,[16] including recognition that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides a

[14] Resolution 69/313, para. 132.
[15] E/FFDF/2016/3.
[16] A/71/88-E/2016/68.

global framework for financing sustainable development and is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, and helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions.[17]

24. Messages of particular relevance to the role of the United Nations system in follow-up and review processes regarding the regional dimension of sustainable development and countries in special situations are reported below.

B. Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda: going forward

25. In the 2030 Agenda, the Secretary-General was requested to prepare, in consultation with Member States, a report for consideration at the seventieth session of the General Assembly, in preparation for the 2016 meeting of the high-level political forum, outlining critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level.

26. The report[18] reflects the analysis and proposals of the Secretary-General, drawing from the responses of 119 Member States to a questionnaire circulated by the Secretariat. Entities of the United Nations system and major groups and other stakeholders also provided inputs. Recognizing that primary responsibility for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda lies at the national level, the report explores alternatives for coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level. within the mandates defined by the Agenda. The report contains a number of recommendations, including recommendations on: how best to integrate relevant review processes and assessments by the United Nations system, non-United Nations organizations and national reviews; how to ensure that high-quality data supports the reviews; and how to ensure inclusiveness in global reviews, the ultimate goal of which is to accelerate progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It also contains recommendations on the definition of themes and thematic reviews for the meetings of the high-level political forum held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, on voluntary national reviews, how they could be featured at the high-level political forum and how they could be followed up on. The annex to the report contains a proposal for voluntary common reporting guidelines for voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum.

27. Subsequent to the submission of the report, on 29 July 2016 the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/299 on follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level. The resolution established, inter alia, that the sequence of themes for each four-year cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development shall reflect the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Sustainable Development Goals and the three dimensions of sustainable development, including cross-cutting issues and new and emerging issues, and shall serve as the framework for reviewing all 17 Goals. In the same resolution, the Assembly also determined the themes for the 2017, 2018 and 2019 meetings of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and established sets of Sustainable Development Goals to be

[17] See ibid., para. 94.
[18] A/70/684.

reviewed in depth at those meetings, with Goal 17 to be reviewed annually, and also decided that the Council shall ensure the alignment of its annual main themes and the corresponding annual themes of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Council.

C. Technology Facilitation Mechanism

28. In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Heads of State and Government decided to establish a Technology Facilitation Mechanism, based on multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders.[19] The Mechanism was launched by Heads of State and Government in the 2030 Agenda.[20]

29. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism has three components: (a) the United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals; (b) the collaborative annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals; and (c) an online platform to serve as a gateway for information on existing science, technology and innovation initiatives, mechanisms and programmes within and beyond the United Nations system.[21]

30. The inter-agency task team was constituted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in September 2015, and its terms of reference were adopted in October 2015. The task team is mandated to "promote coordination, coherence and cooperation within the United Nations system on science, technology and innovation-related matters, enhancing synergy and efficiency, in particular to enhance capacity-building initiatives", drawing on existing resources. It now counts 31 members from the United Nations system and its membership is growing. In January 2016, the Secretary-General appointed a group of 10 eminent representatives from civil society, the scientific community and the private sector to work with the task team to support the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism.[22]

31. The inter-agency task team and the 10 eminent representatives have collaborated closely on preparations to operationalize the Technology Facilitation Mechanism. In line with their mandate, they prepared the concept for the forum on science, technology and innovation, identified key resource persons, organized side events and supported the organization of innovative features of the forum, including a worldwide "call for innovations", as well as an "Exhibition hub", in which selected innovators were featured, and online discussions on science, technology and innovation whose content informed the discussions at the forum. The 10 representatives and the task team have also produced terms of reference for the independent technical assessment that was mandated as a first step to inform the work on the online platform that will constitute one of the core elements of the Mechanism.

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[19] Resolution 69/313, annex, para. 123.

[20] Resolution 70/1, para. 70.

[21] Up-to-date information on the Technology Facilitation Mechanism can be accessed at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM.

[22] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/technology/facilitationmechanism/10membergroup.

32. On 6 and 7 June 2016, the President of the Economic and Social Council convened the first annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals. As a component of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, the forum is mandated to discuss cooperation in science, technology and innovation around thematic areas for the implementation of the Goals, coordinating all relevant stakeholders to actively contribute in their area of expertise. The forum is tasked with identifying and examining technology needs and gaps in order to facilitate the development, transfer and dissemination of relevant technologies for the implementation of the 17 Goals.

33. The forum was well attended, with more than 600 participants representing 81 Governments and more than 350 scientists, innovators, technology specialists, entrepreneurs and civil society representatives. The forum presented innovative seating arrangements and interactive sessions that provided adequate time for discussion among all stakeholders. In line with its mandate, the forum experimented with ways to promote networking and matchmaking. Positive feedback from different groups of stakeholders was received during the official meeting and through social media.

34. Participants in the forum discussed activities and policies that support the development of technology, science and innovation that advances implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Emphasis was placed on how to make technological solutions and innovations more readily available to those who need them. Innovators, who were selected from more than 350 responses to an open call, presented transformative, scalable examples that already shape human interactions in a number of areas covered by the Sustainable Development Goals. Participants reflected on how information technology can support better sharing of information and matchmaking between technology supply and demand. In a ministerial dialogue, ministers contrasted their experiences in establishing national frameworks and strategies for science, technology and innovation. A session of the forum was devoted to the role of young people in science, technology and innovation and how they are using new approaches to innovate and develop solutions to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. In line with the mandate of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, the summary submitted by the co-chairs of the forum informed the high-level political forum on sustainable development in the context of the follow-up review of the 2030 Agenda.[23]

35. The third component of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism is the online platform, which, in the terms of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, will "be used to establish a comprehensive mapping of, and serve as a gateway for, information on existing science, technology and innovation initiatives, mechanisms and programmes, within and beyond the United Nations. The online platform will facilitate access to information, knowledge and experience, as well as best practices and lessons learned, on science, technology and innovation facilitation initiatives and policies. The online platform will also facilitate the dissemination of relevant open access scientific publications generated worldwide".[24] As a first step, Member States mandated an independent technical assessment. The inter-agency task team and the 10 eminent representatives have prepared terms of reference for the

[23] The programme of the forum and further information can be found at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum.

[24] See resolution 69/313, annex, para. 123.

assessment, and are in the process of identifying suitable candidates to carry it out.[25] An obstacle to the realization of the independent technical assessment since the launch of the Mechanism has been the lack of resources dedicated to it.

36. Through the inter-agency task team, United Nations organizations are strengthening their collaboration and coordination on science, technology and innovation. The task team has also conducted initial discussions on enhancing synergy and efficiency within the United Nations related to science, technology and innovation for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including enhancing capacity-building initiatives. It is currently carrying out a mapping of initiatives related to science, technology and innovation within the United Nations system. It is envisioned that this mapping will be complemented by information on initiatives taking place outside the Organization, as well as by existing needs assessments, in order to develop a meaningful basis for identifying potential gaps and synergies.

37. The task team will continue to work closely with all interested Member States and the 10 eminent members, in order to realize the potential of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The forum will also provide an ideal opportunity for the task team to receive feedback from Member States and other key stakeholders in the fields of science, technology and innovation.

D. Strengthening the science-policy interface and Global Sustainable Development Report

38. In "The future we want", the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, it was determined that the high-level political forum would "strengthen the science-policy interface through review of documentation bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report, building on existing assessments".[26]

39. The 2016 high-level political forum featured two sessions dedicated to the science-policy interface. The discussions highlighted that, more than ever, science is needed to inform the implementation of the ambitious 2030 Agenda. While many problems posed by the 2030 Agenda cannot be solved by science, they will clearly benefit from the most complete picture that science can provide. In turn, science needs to be responsive to the questions that are put forward by the Agenda. Hence, it was suggested that the high-level political forum should remain a central platform for dialogue between science and policy. It should continue to seek the inputs of scientific communities worldwide, as they have proved that they are eager to contribute. It was suggested that a core area of focus for the science-policy interface at the political forum should be the interlinkages across the Sustainable Development Goals.

40. The identification of new and emerging issues is a critical function of the science-policy interface, and it is also one of the functions of the high-level political forum. Discussions at the 2016 political forum highlighted that a wide range of

[25] The terms of reference for the independent technical assessment can be consulted at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/OnlinePlatform.

[26] Resolution 66/288, annex, para. 85 (k).

sources can usefully be drawn on when identifying emerging issues for its attention. The involvement of experts from multiple disciplines brings critical value added, including for prioritizing emerging issues and providing multidimensional analyses of the issues and their interconnectedness. Scanning system for emerging issues should pay special attention to those left behind.

41. In order to keep the conversation between scientists and policymakers alive, concrete suggestions were made, which included: maintaining open calls for science-policy briefs on a continuous basis; having annual updates on new and emerging issues at the high-level political forum; convening intersessional science meetings; and relying on voluntary efforts by the scientific community to produce science-based thematic reviews for the high-level political forum.

42. In the 2030 Agenda it was determined that the Global Sustainable Development Report would inform follow-up and review at the high-level political forum, and that it would "strengthen the science-policy interface and could provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policymakers in promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development." In response to that mandate, in 2016 the Department of Economic and Social Affairs published a third prototype edition of the Global Sustainable Development Report, which was launched at the 2016 high-level political forum. The 2016 Global Sustainable Development Report focused on the theme of the 2016 political forum, "Ensuring that no one is left behind". As a critical dimension of the science-policy interface, the report also explores ways in which new and emerging issues identified by science could be screened and analysed for the benefit of the high-level political forum. A summary for policymakers was submitted to the political forum.[27] The preparation of the report involved an inclusive, multi-stakeholder process drawing upon scientific and technical expertise from within and outside the United Nations. Two hundred and forty-five scientists and experts contributed to the report. Sixty-two policy briefs were submitted in response to an open call. Twenty agencies, departments and programmes of the United Nations system contributed to the report.

43. In the 2030 Agenda, the President of the Economic and Social Council was mandated with the conduct of a process of consultations on the scope, methodology and frequency of the Global Sustainable Development Report, as well as its relation to the progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals. These consultations were held between March and April 2016. The agreement reached among Member States is reflected in the ministerial declaration of the high-level political forum. Member States decided that the Global Sustainable Development Report will be prepared once every four years for the meetings of the political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly. They have designed a three-tier mechanism for the preparation of the report composed of 15 eminent expert scientists to write the report, supported by a task team co-led by representatives of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Bank, which "will coordinate inputs from a network of existing networks, representing the United Nations, the private sector, civil society and academia".

[27] E/HLPF/2016/4.

44. Participants at the 2016 high-level political forum indicated that the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report should involve more than a "snapshot" type of reporting on the levels of achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. It should be relevant for policymakers, and address emerging issues as well as key bottlenecks to implementation from a scientific perspective and help inform policymakers in that matter. In operationalizing the mechanism put in place by Member States for the production of the report, it will be important to mobilize the broadest possible range of scientific inputs from multiple disciplines. Scientists reported that they see the process of mobilizing the scientific community around the Sustainable Development Goals as being as important as the Global Sustainable Development Report itself, and that the latter should be seen as a product of the former. Lessons learned in terms of seeking the involvement of scientists through multiple channels and providing institutional space for scientists, especially young scientists, could be useful for the preparation of the 2019 report.

E. Regional dimension of sustainable development

45. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development ("The future we want"), General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda all acknowledge the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development, including follow-up and review at the regional level, alongside national and global levels.

46. Since the holding of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and in response to the mandate of the General Assembly calling on the regional commissions to contribute to the work of the high-level political forum, including through regional meetings,[28] States Members of the regional commissions have established regional forums for sustainable development: the third session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, was held in Bangkok in April 2016; the third session of the Arab Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, was held in Amman in May 2016; the second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic Commission for Africa and other bodies, was held in Cairo in May 2016; the Economic Commission for Europe held its first Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in Geneva in May 2016, as a special informal segment of its Executive Committee meeting; and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean established the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development at its thirty-sixth regular session in Mexico City in May 2016.

47. Reports of the regional forums on sustainable development and regional preparatory meetings to the high-level political forum are contained in a note by the Secretariat.[29] Regional efforts and perspectives on supporting implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and on enhancing support for its

[28] See resolution 67/290.
[29] E/HLPF/2016/3, Adds. 1-5.

implementation are contained in the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields.[30]

48. In the session on "Regional experiences" held during the high-level political forum in 2016, it was stressed that regional organizations and initiatives provide important platforms for addressing regional priorities and challenges, mobilizing collective action and addressing transboundary issues. They are critical for ensuring coherence and integration of the 2030 Agenda with regional agendas and visions, for integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans and for strengthening the capacity of Governments to implement the Agenda. Building capacity with regard to data, in particular data disaggregation, is an area where regional organizations can, and are already, contributing. Such capacity-building is necessary in order to monitor the imperative of leaving no one behind. Regional forums on sustainable development will be a key part of the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, establishing a link between national and global processes.

F. Sustainable consumption and production and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production

49. Sustainable consumption and production is a central aspect of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want", and of the 2030 Agenda, as reflected, particularly, in Goal 12, but also in additional targets. The terms in which the 2030 Agenda addresses sustainable consumption and production, alongside other issues, make it coherent with the ideas underlying the concept of the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as addressed in "The future we want".

50. At the 2016 meeting of the high-level political forum, sustainable consumption and production were addressed as a cross-cutting theme in several thematic sessions as well as in the voluntary national reviews. Participants referred, inter alia, to initiatives and policies on strategic cooperation on sustainability with the private sector; initiatives on increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy; sustainable tourism; sustainable agriculture; waste; analyses of the ecological footprint, domestic material consumption and resource productivity; revision of fuel price policies and investments in mass transportation; sustainable public procurement; and transparency and information for consumers. Sustainable consumption and production is among the top priorities in implementation strategies for the 2030 Agenda in some countries. It is considered central to "green growth" strategies in others and as critical in the efforts to address the effects of climate change. The interconnectedness between production and consumption patterns, including natural resource management, and sustainable development in different parts of the world was recognized, and some countries reported on initiatives to ensure sustainability throughout global supply chains. During the general debate of the high-level political forum, sustainable consumption and production was considered a central requirement in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Participants also referred to strategies on the green economy, green growth and related concepts.

[30] E/2016/15.

51. The ministerial declaration of the high-level political forum[31] emphasizes the commitment of signatories to ensure that consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources are sustainable.

52. The 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development[32] is expressly referred to in targets 12.1 and 8.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/214, requested that the reporting of the board of the 10-year framework of programmes and its secretariat be made to the high-level political forum through the Economic and Social Council. The progress report on the 10-year framework submitted through the Council for the consideration of the political forum is contained in a note by the Secretary-General.[33]

III. Efforts by the United Nations system to ensure that no country is left behind

53. Critical to ensuring that no country is left behind are efforts to support countries in special situations

54. United Nations system entities have worked to support countries in special situations, including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island development States through analytical work, intergovernmental support, advocacy and capacity-building through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, UNCTAD, the regional commissions and numerous agencies and programmes providing support at the national, regional and global level. The entities of the United Nations system have also addressed the particular challenges of middle-income countries, which, while fairing relatively well in terms of per capita income, face particular challenges in terms of inequalities within their borders.

55. In regard to the least developed countries, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 69/231 and 70/216, the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 was convened in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016. At the meeting a political declaration was adopted[34] which addressed the state of progress and lessons learned in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and presented recommendations, reaffirming the global commitment to address the special needs of the least developed countries. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States has prepared a mainstreaming toolkit to support the ongoing efforts of the entities of the United Nations system to effectively mainstream the provisions of the Istanbul Programme of Action into their work programmes.

56. With regard to small island developing States, in its resolution 70/202 the General Assembly called for the full and effective implementation of the

[31] E/2016/L.24-E/HLPF/2016/L.2.
[32] A/CONF.216/5, annex.
[33] E/2016/62.
[34] Resolution 70/294.

commitments and partnerships announced at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States and the fulfilment of the provisions on all means of implementation, as contained in the SAMOA Pathway. The Assembly also decided to establish the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for small island developing States in order to promote the effective and efficient follow-up to the existing partnerships and to encourage new, genuine and durable partnerships for the sustainable development of small island developing States. The Assembly also urged that effective linkages be made between the follow-up and review arrangements for the 2030 Agenda and those of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including the SAMOA Pathway, in line with the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations system has supported small island developing States in that regard, inter alia, through the efforts of the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. A report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS,[35] prepared in consultation with relevant bodies of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations and Member States, outlines the progress made towards furthering the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in accordance with resolution 70/202.

57. As regards landlocked developing countries, in accordance with the mandate of the General Assembly, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States continued to coordinate follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for the Decade 2014-2024. Efforts included awareness raising and advocacy for the special needs of landlocked developing countries; mobilization and coordination of the efforts of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and other stakeholders with a view to providing technical assistance, capacity-building and international support to landlocked developing countries as part of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action; supporting landlocked developing countries in effective mainstreaming of the Vienna Programme of Action into national and regional development strategies; and undertaking research and analysis.[36]

58. The 2016 high-level political forum addressed countries in special situations in two sessions. Messages emanating from forum of particular relevance to the continued support by the entities of the United Nations system to Member States in special situations to ensure that no country is left behind are as follows:

(a) The Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved if significant progress is not made in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. Many countries have had difficulties overcoming structural problems. The global environment has not been conducive to their development and global support has been limited. Going forward, it will be important to address the root causes of vulnerability and marginalization in those countries;

[35] A/71/267.

[36] For more information see A/70/305.

(b) Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals will be different for all countries and groups. National priorities should be the starting point. Synergies will have to be found between the 2030 Agenda and strategies and programmes of actions specific to groups of countries, such as the Istanbul Programme of Action, the Vienna Programme of Action, the SAMOA Pathway and Africa 2063. Several countries reported that, owing to limited resources, they have prioritized among the various Goals, while taking into account the need to ensure a balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development;

(c) Countries in special situations face difficulties in mobilizing human and financial resources. Beyond enhancing domestic resource mobilization, their success will largely depend on a strengthened global partnership, including capacity-building, technology transfer, technical and financial support, trade facilitation, and international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows. Commitments in terms of ODA need to be met. Mobilizing scientific know-how and expertise in these countries will be crucial, and international cooperation can play an important role;

(d) Regarding the small island developing States in particular, the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda are well aligned and mutually supportive. Specific clusters of Goals, for example the nexus among food security, oceans and climate change, have special relevance for the small island developing States. It will be important to develop versions of the green economy and the blue economy that are appropriate to national circumstances. Climate change is a central concern and climate change mitigation by all countries will be critical for small island developing States. Climate finance should be made available to those countries, in particular under the Green Climate Fund. The high vulnerability of small island developing States to natural disasters should be taken into account when considering their graduation from the least developed country category. Financing and resource mobilization remain a challenge in small island developing States. Tax bases are generally low and the pool of investors limited. Attracting foreign direct investment remains a challenge;

(e) Data availability is severely limited in many countries in special situations, due to the limited capacity of national statistical offices, lack of basic data, lack of data systems at the national level and lack of access to technology and data infrastructure. Furthermore, commonly used indicators may not reflect the reality of countries in special situations, for example the highly dispersed population patterns in some small island developing States. The capacity of national statistical offices needs to be strengthened. Efforts should be made by these countries to develop primary data systems and to embrace the data revolution, including promoting citizen-led monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(f) Middle-income countries are a diverse group facing particular challenges — notably high degrees of internal inequalities, which are not reflected in income criteria.

IV. Mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development by the United Nations system

59. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development called for the further mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development

throughout the United Nations system and requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on progress made in that regard.

60. Building on the three previous reports (A/70/75-E/2015/55, A/69/79-E/2014/66 and A/68/79-E/2013/69), the fourth report (A/71/76-E/2016/55) addressed mainstreaming as a means to integrate activities and policies and more effectively assist Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, along with other far reaching agreements, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

61. The report emphasized the importance of mainstreaming, with the objective of integrating activities and policies around the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, which are interlinked and indivisible and must be pursued as whole, and stressed the importance of intergovernmental guidance for the further integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, in particular the role of the high-level political forum and its thematic reviews of progress, including of cross-cutting issues.

62. The entities of the United Nations system have adopted a number of measures to enhance collective support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, in April 2016 the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination endorsed a set of common principles to guide the support of the United Nations system in the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the Board's High-level Committee on Programmes supported system-wide efforts to strengthen the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into the work of the United Nations system by focusing on key initiatives for enhancing coordinated and integrated support to Member States on climate change, disaster risk reduction and sustainable urbanization.

63. The United Nations Development Group is developing tools, guidelines and methodologies and mobilizing resources to ensure coherent support at the national level, aligned with the requirements of the 2030 Agenda, across the development, humanitarian, human rights and peacebuilding agendas of the United Nations.

64. Throughout 2015, seven entities of the United Nations system completed the implementation of pilot projects to promote the implementation of a framework for advancing environmental and social sustainability throughout the United Nations system. The pilot projects were endorsed by the Environment Management Group, the United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanism on environmental issues, in 2012. Building on the outcome of the pilot projects, which showed that progress had been made by a significant number of United Nations agencies in introducing and integrating environmental sustainability in their operations and facilities management, steps are being taken within the context of the Environment Management Group to strengthen efforts in this regard.

65. The entities of the United Nations system are coordinating their work around selected areas: water, through UN-Water; sustainable cities and human settlements; and the development-humanitarian nexus.

66. Going forward, the report stresses the need for overcoming silos and seeking new and collaborative approaches to integration.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

67. A year into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, there is evidence of firm commitment at all levels and of engagement from multiple stakeholders for its implementation. The adoption and initial stages of implementation of the 2030 Agenda itself are major steps towards the ambitions expressed in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, setting the stage for inclusive, sustainable, development. However, there is equal evidence of multiple and significant challenges ahead. The role of the United Nations system will be critical to help countries overcome these challenges. The experience gained from the 2016 high-level political forum will be invaluable in the development of the agenda of subsequent sessions and in ensuring the effectiveness of the contribution of the political forum to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

68. In this context, the General Assembly may consider, at its seventy-first session:

(a) Inviting Member States and other stakeholders to continue to fully engage in support of the work of the high-level political forum in order to consolidate its central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes at the global level;

(b) Inviting the President of the Economic and Social Council to consider, with support from the United Nations system, means of ensuring that national and regional preparatory processes to the high-level political forum, as well as relevant international processes, are adequately reflected at the meetings of the forum, so as to make full use of those processes for the benefit of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to enhance policy coordination and coherence;

(c) Inviting Member States and entities of the United Nations system to continue to ensure multi-stakeholder participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in preparatory processes for the high-level political forum and voluntary national reviews;

(d) Inviting the President of the Economic and Social Council to reflect on the experience with the first 22 voluntary national reviews presented at the 2016 high-level political forum, and to consider calling on the Secretariat to prepare an analysis of the 22 reviews presented in 2016;

(e) Calling on the United Nations system to continue to support Member States that request assistance in the preparation of voluntary national reviews;

(f) Encouraging Member States that submitted voluntary national reviews in 2016 to share their experiences in support of the countries volunteering to submit reviews in future years, including in a regional setting;

(g) Encouraging the scientific community to contribute to the Global Sustainable Development Report and to submit voluntary science-based inputs focussing on the annual theme of the high-level political forum;

(h) Encouraging Member States to support the production of the Global Sustainable Development Report and, for this purpose, to consider establishing a dedicated trust fund;

(i) Requesting the Secretariat to prepare a short list of emerging issues relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for consideration of the high-

level political forum at its meeting in 2017, based on consultation of scientific experts from a broad range of disciplines;

(j) Calling on the United Nations system to make further efforts to integrate the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development;

(k) Calling on the United Nations system to support countries in the development of national statistical capacities and strengthening of national statistics offices and institutes to enable the generation and analysis of data, including disaggregated data, necessary to assess the pledge to "leave no one behind";

(l) Encouraging the United Nations system to help countries further develop their information systems in relation to marginalized groups, including through the inclusion of those groups in the collection of data reflecting their specific circumstances and needs;

(m) Inviting the high-level political forum to continue considering means of implementation in an integrated manner as part of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda;

(n) Inviting all United Nations organizations, within their respective mandates, to consider the theme of the 2017 high-level political forum in their work in order to enhance coherence and ensure that full use is made of the potential of the United Nations system to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.